

Select Board Meeting
Monday November 9, 2020
6:30 PM
Remotely via Zoom
Final Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Julie Gilman, Molly Cowan, Lovey Roundtree Oliff, Daryl Browne, Niko Papakonstantis, and Russ Dean were present at this meeting. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 6:30 PM.

Mr. Papakonstantis read a statement:

As Chair of the Select Board, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Public notice of this meeting was posted on the town website and on the bulletin board of the town offices at 10 Front Street. As provided in that public notice, the public may access the meeting online and via phone.

Please note that all votes taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote. Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting and who that person is (son, daughter, spouse, etc...), which is required under the Right-to-Know law.

2. Non-Public Session

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to enter into non-public session per RSA 91A:3II(a). Mr. Browne seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor, and the meeting went into non-public at 6:35 PM. The meeting reconvened at 7:10 PM.

3. Board Interviews

- a. The Board interviewed Cammie Switzer for the Human Services Committee.

4. Public Comment

- a. There was no public comment at this meeting.

5. Proclamations/Recognitions: Champions of Democracy Awards

Ms. Gilman presented the Champions of Democracy award to Andrea Kohler, Town Clerk; Vicki Nawoichyk, Supervisor of the Checklist; and Paul Scafidi, the Town Moderator.

6. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting: October 26, 2020

Corrections: Ms. Gilman said the Mask Ordinance vote was not captured; the result was 4-1.

MOTION: Ms. Oliff moved to approve the minutes of October 26, 2020 as amended. Mr. Browne seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

7. Discussion/Action Items

a. Holiday Parade Proposal - Beth Dupell

Ms. Dupell proposed a “reverse parade”, where attendees would drive by and the holiday vignettes will be stationary. Potential traffic prohibited the parade from downtown, but the SAU 16 School Board agreed to host it on the High School campus. They’re planning to hold this event Saturday, December 5, from 5 PM to 8 PM. They will be looking for donations of materials once they get approval. Health Officer James Murray said he approves of the plan. Melissa Roy, Assistant Parks and Rec Director, said they met with Police, Fire, and Ms. Dupell and they’ve all discussed and reviewed the proposal.

MOTION: Mr. Browne moved to approve the special event application for the Holiday Event Celebration proposal to take place at Exeter High School on December 5 2020 5 - 8 PM. Ms. Gilman seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

b. Classification Plan Updates - Fire Department

Chief Wilking proposed a restructuring and reclassification of some Fire Department positions to make the chain of command and rank clearer. These are non-union positions. The new positions would be an Assistant Chief of the Fire Department, an Assistant Emergency Management Director, a Deputy Chief of Training and EMS, and a Deputy Chief of Prevention and Inspections who would work with Mr. Murray. They’re looking at a January 1 2021 rollout for this change.

MOTION: Ms. Oliff moved to delete the Grade 14 positions of *Assistant Fire Chief - EMS Coordinator* and *Assistant Fire Chief - Deputy EMD*, and create under Grade 13 *Deputy Fire Chief - Training/EMS* and *Deputy Fire Chief - Fire Prevention/Inspections*; and also to add at Grade 15, *Assistant Fire Chief - Assistant EMD*. Ms. Cowan seconded. Mr. Browne asked if these positions are non-union because they are management, and Chief Wilking said yes, they’re exempt. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

c. Impact Fee Updates

Dave Sharples, the Town Planner, introduced Bruce Mayberry, who completed an Education and Rec impact fee study. Mr. Mayberry gave a presentation on his recommendations and some options for the town to determine how to assess the fees.

Mr. Browne asked if there is flexibility for changing needs based on the pandemic. Mr. Mayberry said it’s hard to predict; the way to adjust for changes is to commission an update. Ms. Gilman asked where facilities like Riverwoods come into the picture. Mr. Mayberry said they excluded the age restricted and assisted living homes when defining the ratio of schoolchildren to housing unit, because these facilities wouldn’t be assessed the fees.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked the Board if they’d like to recommend specifics of the fees at this meeting or the next, and the Board agreed to discuss them further at the next meeting. The matter will also go to the Planning Board.

d. FY 19 Audit Report

Doreen Chester, the Finance Director, and Ed Boyd, the Auditor from Melanson, were present to discuss the audit report. Mr. Boyd said the audit went very well. This was the first Covid-19 remote audit. They found that the books and records were in order. They issued a management letter, but only regarding a few housekeeping items. They gave an “unmodified/clean opinion,” which means that financial statements are presented in accordance with commonly accepted accounting principles. The Unassigned Fund Balance paints the picture of liquidity and fiscal health. It was at \$2.2M in 2016, \$2.8M in 2017, \$3.6M in 2018, and \$3.3M 2019. This is strong growth and a positive trend, with an explainable decrease in 2019, and it continues to trend in the right direction. Pension liability and OPEB are slightly less positive. Regarding pension liability, the NH retirement system is about 65% funded, resulting in a collective shortfall. Each community is required to recognize its percentage of the liability. Every community in NH is dealing with this. There is a plan in place, and that number could be zero in 2039. Regarding OPEB, or other post-employment benefits, such as retiree health care; retirees are required to pay 100% of the premiums, the town still has liability.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked how Exeter compares to other towns of its size. Mr. Boyd said the General Fund percentages are stable and strong.

Mr. Boyd discussed the audit comments: 1) The policy on town receipts is probably outdated now that the town has transitioned to the MUNIS platform. The rating agencies look at policies and procedures because it’s something that helps with continuity. 2) The town has been proactive about resolving prior year deficits. 3) They confirmed Town compliance with new impact fee legislation, ie the Select Board must formally authorize the use of impact fee revenues. Comments 4) and 5) relate to the Library, which was not retaining original documentation for charges against its credit card or Amazon account. These must be retained until audited, plus one year. The Library Director responded that Amazon and other vendors do not often send packing slips or invoices, but the Library will keep the original order forms. The final comment is that the Library should improve the controls over petty cash. Mr. Dean said the town does not manage the library’s governance, but their practices are audited as part of the town.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if they have seen progress on the policies and procedures. Mr. Boyd said he thinks the missing piece is in the transition to MUNIS, as they’re not using the full capability of the system. Mr. Papakonstantis asked how they can help the Library do better. Mr. Dean said they alerted the library to the issue and offered any support needed.

e. COVID 19 Updates

- i. Ms. Oliff asked about helping local businesses with collecting data on patrons for contact tracing, which is now mandated. Mr. Murray said he worked with Mr. Winham and Mr. Glowacky on an Excel form to send out to businesses. Restaurants are required to attempt to gather information such as the approximate time of patronage, one member’s contact info,

the location where they were seated, and their server. If an individual refuses to give the information, they are not forced to, although they can be refused service if the restaurant wishes. They can discard the information after a certain number of days. This applies only to dine-in service, not takeout and counter service. He can work with the Communications Committee on getting specifics out to restaurants.

- ii. Mr. Browne said he would like the town to conduct more well-child checks, so they can intervene in situations earlier, prior to crises. Mr. Dean said Pam McElroy is the Human Services coordinator and interfaces with a lot of local agencies as well as the Hospital. Chief Wilking says Fire/Rescue does get involved in such situations and gets many well person requests. Often these are for single people, rather than a family in crisis. They tend to be more reactive than on the prevention side. If neighbors call in for welfare checks, they can help earlier. Mr. Dean said his office can triage and get agencies involved when they get those calls. Servicelink and 211 are other opportunities to get agencies involved.
- iii. Chief Wilking said that the Rockingham County and Exeter numbers are the worst since the start of the pandemic. Exeter had 21 residents test positive in the last two weeks. Exeter is one of the 20 largest towns in NH by population, and only two other communities in that category have low numbers as low as ours. Exeter has had 103 resident cases total. They're hearing about a vaccine, which would at first be limited to health care workers and the vulnerable population. They're looking to see if the first responder network can be part of FROST, the First Responder Optional Screening Test. This program offers monthly testing to all personnel using the rapid antigen test. Anyone testing positive would immediately take a more definitive test, then quarantine if they tested positive.
- iv. Mr. Murray said he reached out to the Seacoast Public Health Network on the State plan for the vaccine. SST was identified as a potential distribution site. 25% of the vaccines that come down to the State will be given to public entities, and 75% to health care workers.
- v. Mr. Bisson presented a proposal on a basketball program, which the Rec Advisory Board had voted to present to the Select Board. This would be a similar model as in the fall, with "skills and drills" so teams aren't playing multiple scrimmages a week. There would be no spectators. Kids and coaches would wear masks. There would be two groups in the gym with a divider separating them. Equipment would be sanitized after use. They wouldn't be starting until after MLK Day, to limit exposure to any cases contracted during the holidays. SAU 16 has opened the gym, but there's a \$75 per night sanitation cost. Mr. Papakonstantis asked what if there were an outbreak during the season. Mr. Bisson said they would suspend for two weeks to allow those kids to quarantine. There's a buffer built in at the end of the season to compensate for this time. Mr. Papakonstantis

asked how the extra cost is being paid, and Mr. Bisson said they have fewer expenses with this format, so it should be about the same cost to families. Ms. Oliff asked if there is a certain number of cases they would get to in town where the program would automatically stop, and Mr. Bisson said they haven't yet come up with that number.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve the Exeter Parks and Rec 2021 Winter Basketball program as outlined in the November 9, 2020 memo. Ms. Gilman seconded. Ms. Cowan said she is uncomfortable with the potential for community spread but will vote yes. Mr. Papakonstantis said he wants Parks and Rec to carefully monitor the situation and shut it down if necessary. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

Mr. Bisson said they are close to joining an E-sports League. The volunteers made the Halloween Parade a huge success.

- vi. Mr. Dean said the students went back today to Lincoln and Main Street Schools. He talked to Dr. Ryan today, and heard that within the schools they've kept Covid from transmitting, but outside that circle they can't control it. One agency that does business with the town had a positive test, and the town is doing contact tracing. They're getting started with Docusign. Tomorrow morning, he has a Zoom meeting with all the Department heads about remote work. His office heard some complaints about masks that Mr. Murray looked into.

8. Regular Business

- a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions
 - i. There were no abatements or exemptions at this meeting.
- b. Permits & Approvals
 - i. The certification form sales ratio survey, which must be filled out by the Board. Mr. Dean said they could use Docusign.
 - ii. The MS1 has been submitted and accepted.
 - iii. A memo from the DPW regarding the water restrictions, which they recommend continuing until 2021.
- c. Town Manager's Report
 - i. Mr. Dean said he's working on the tax rate setting; they hope to hear info in the next few days from DRA. They're planning to use the same amount of fund balance as anticipated against the tax rate. The school portion may go down, and the town may have a 18-20 cent change, so there should be a similar rate to last year or slightly lower.
 - ii. Town Offices are closed Wednesday for Veterans' day.
 - iii. There's a Budget Recommendation Committee meeting on Thursday to discuss the Water/Sewer budget.
 - iv. Nils Larsson, a Wastewater Treatment Operator, moved into a Senior Operator position.
 - v. They extended outdoor dining to December 31, 2020.

- vi. Legal is working on a petition to quiet title on a property near Sanborn Street.
- d. Select Board Committee Reports
 - i. Mr. Browne did not attend the Facilities Committee meeting. Tomorrow there is a Communications Committee meeting.
 - ii. Ms. Oliff said there was no Housing Committee meeting last week, and the minutes for the Swasey Parkway Trustees have not been posted.
 - iii. Ms. Cowan had a Rec Advisory meeting, where they had a detailed discussion about e-sports, equity and cost, as participants will have to own the gaming equipment already.
 - iv. Ms. Gilman had a Heritage Commission meeting, where there was discussion on the Park Street Area Heritage Neighborhood District. There were a lot of questions, so they're going to discuss it again. There's an HDC meeting Thursday.
 - v. Mr. Papakonstantis said the Sustainability Advisory meeting was postponed to December 1st.
- e. Correspondence
 - i. A memo from Jennifer Perry regarding the Squamscott River Siphons. Mr. Dean said there was some leakage from a pipe at the Webster Station, and the DPW is doing some emergency repairs.
 - ii. An email from a Stratham resident; Mr. Dean intends to reach out to PEA to find out what the situation is.
 - iii. A note regarding virtual town meetings
 - iv. A notification of the Health Trust annual board elections. Mr. Dean is up for reelection.
 - v. A notice of work opportunities in the Seacoast region from the Chamber of Commerce.
 - vi. An email regarding a social media post, which Mr. Dean will follow up on.
- 9. Review Board Calendar
 - a. The next meeting November 23, Dec 7, December 21st.
- 10. Non-Public Session
 - a. There was no non-public session at this time.
- 11. Adjournment

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to adjourn. Mr. Browne seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 9:51 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary